

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEGUCI 03712 092017Z

ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /074 W

-----057131 100211Z /75

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FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7493

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3712

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PGOV, PINS, PINT, HO

SUBJECT: STRIKE AT TEXACO REFINERY

1. THE UNION AT THE TEXACO REFINERY IN PUERTO CORTES, HONDURAS' ONLY REFINERY, WENT ON STRIKE ON SUNDAY, AUGUST 7. THE STRIKE AROSE FROM A DISPUTE OVER THE FINANCIAL CLAUSES OF A NEW CONTRACT. THE REFINERY CLAIMS IT IS UNABLE TO MEET THE WORKERS DEMANDS DUE TO INCREASING OPERATING EXPENSES, INCLUDING THE COST OF CRUDE. THE WORKERS CLAIM THE REFINERY IS FULLY CAPABLE OF MEETING THEIR DEMANDS WITHOUT INCREASING THE PRICE OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS IN HONDURAS. AFTER CABINET LEVEL MEETINGS IN PUERTO CORTES ON AUGUST 8, WHICH INCLUDED THE LABOR, DEFENSE, FINANCE AND ECONOMY MINISTERS, THE GOH HAS DECLARED THE REFINERY TO BE A "WAR ZONE," PLACING ITS WORKERS UNDER MILITARY JURISDICTION. THE GOH, UNDER MILITARY REGULATIONS, THEN ORDERED THE WORKERS TO RETURN TO THE REFINERY NO LATER THAN TODAY, AUGUST 9.

2. THE UNION HAS RECEIVED LIMITED SUPPORT FROM OTHER LABOR ORGANIZATIONS. HOWEVER, THE STRIKE ACTION WAS TAKEN WITHOUT CLOSE COORDINATION WITH ITS PARENT FEDERATION, FESITRANH (NORTH COAST LABOR FEDERATION). THE REFINERY WORKERS UNION IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO BE LEFTIST ORIENTED.

3. COMMENT: PUBLIC SPECULATION AND COMMENTS BY UNION
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PAGE 02 TEGUCI 03712 092017Z

LEADERSHIP INDICATE THAT THE UNION MAY HAVE GONE ON STRIKE IN AN ATTEMPT TO FORCE THE GOH TO NATIONALIZE TEXACO. IF SO, IT HAS FOUND LITTLE PUBLIC ECHO.

4. WHILE THE FESITRANH AND CTH (CONFEDERATION OF HONDURAN WORKERS) AND OTHER LABOR ORGANIZATIONS IN THE COUNTRY CAN BE EXPECTED TO MAKE PRO FORMA PROTESTS OF THE GOH'S ACTION

AGAINST THE TEXACO UNION, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A SERIOUS
CONFRONTATION WILL DEVELOP BETWEEN THE OVERALL LABOR MOVEMENT
AND THE GOH. ANY SUCH CONFRONTATION WOULD BE ONE IN WHICH
THE LABOR MOVEMENT WOULD INEVITABLY LOSE. END COMMENT
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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 09-Aug-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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